

# DNREC Secretary Garvin joins legislators, Fort Miles Historical Association, at ribbon-cutting celebration

**LEWES** – Renovations have been completed improving the old Fort Miles overlook, which has now become an addition to the existing museum building. This new area enables visitors to experience the same view as soldiers during WWII and the Cold War from Battery 519.

**Photo:** DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin speaks before the ribbon cutting at the Fort Miles Museum and Historical Area at Cape Henlopen State Park. Seated event speakers, left to right, are Dr. Gary Wray, Fort Miles Historical Association President; Jeffrey Fried, past board president, Lewes Chamber of Commerce; Lewes Mayor Theodore Becker; State Representative Stephen Smyk, Speaker of the Delaware House of Representatives Peter Schwartzkopf (seated behind Secretary Garvin), and State Senator Ernesto Lopez.

“The Fort Miles Museum and Historic Area utilizes a unique WWII coastal battery complex and artillery park, representative artifacts, and educational activities to interpret Delaware’s role in coastal defense, and how U.S. military forces and civilians shaped and influenced community life in Delaware,” said Secretary Garvin. “All of the new improvements at Fort Miles enhance visitors’ experiences, and bring the fort to life. I thank the Fort Miles Historical Association, members of the General Assembly, and the Division of Parks & Recreation for making these improvements a reality.”

The new overlook provides visitors an enhanced perspective of the area, and the Atlantic Ocean. The new event venue will

allow for additional programming space for visitors to the museum. In addition, it can also serve as an event area. Other improvements include a new glass wall in the north gun block, a restroom facility, and a geothermal HVAC system for north end of the museum.

During WWII Fort Miles served as the East Coast's largest military base and a key piece in the nation's coastal defense. In 1964, 543 acres of the Fort were returned to the State of Delaware, forming the heart of Cape Henlopen State Park. In April 2005, Fort Miles was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Fort Miles Museum encompasses a small but highly significant portion of the Fort's original footprint. The grounds feature one of the Fort's major gun emplacements, Battery 519, along with numerous support buildings that housed WWII soldiers. Fort Miles' armaments comprise a permanent display showcasing Delaware's first line of defense during the early 1940s. It is the largest exhibit of its kind in the country.

In the coming year, the Fort Miles Museum team will be focused on developing new exhibits and enhancing existing displays, to help bring the stories of the men and women of Fort Miles to life.

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